

WALL STREET JOURNAL  
21 March 1986

# Radar Facility in Central Siberia Stirs Debate On How to Deal With Cheating on Arms Control

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In July 1983, a U.S. spy satellite focused on two huge, football-field-sized structures that had been built near Krasnoyarsk, an industrial city in the vast wilderness of central Siberia.

To U.S. intelligence analysts, the satellite showed the familiar features of a sophisticated military radar installation:

*Last of a two-part series.*

large arrays of small antennae capable of generating and steering a radar signal powerful enough to spot relatively small objects at long distances, such as an incoming enemy missile warhead.

The political reaction to this discovery continues to fester in Washington. In the normally fractious U.S. arms-control community there is uncommon agreement that Krasnoyarsk is a bald case of Soviet cheating on a 1972 treaty that forbids such centrally located radars because they could also be used to manage a nationwide anti-ballistic missile system.

While the technology of verifying arms-control agreements has been improving, the matter of what to do when cheating is found is still a dark hole of speculation and political maneuvering. The Reagan administration has put Krasnoyarsk on the top of its list of Soviet cheating incidents. To conservatives, "What about Krasnoyarsk?" has become a shorthand way of calling for an end to all arms-control negotiations.

According to U.S. officials, the Krasnoyarsk radars were probably in the planning stage shortly after the U.S. and the Soviet Union signed the Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems Treaty in 1972. Construction began in the late 1970s and the resulting large structures were probably standing for at least two and a half years before the U.S. finally spotted them.

One problem was that U.S. intelligence analysts had taken the 1972 ABM treaty literally. There was a gap in Soviet radar coverage of the northern Pacific and the ABM treaty required future Soviet "early warning" radars to be built on the U.S.S.R.'s borders, so U.S. satellite coverage had been focused on Soviet coastlines. They finally found the new radar in the Soviet equivalent of St. Louis, almost 2,000 miles inland.

Carnes Lord, who wrote the manual on verification problems for the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency during the Ford administration, says Krasnoyarsk is "the first clear violation that has major military significance." Past cheating—which Mr. Lord describes as a considerable amount of "minor nibbling around the

edges of agreements"—was always at least partly covered by arguable ambiguities, he says.

"Why did they do this?" wonders Mr. Lord, currently working for a private defense-research concern. "This is an expensive thing, not something they're going to want to tear down. We just haven't come up with a way to deal with these kinds of violations."

Soviet officials accompanying their leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, to last November's summit talks in Geneva said they were also worried about the political flap over Krasnoyarsk, which they describe as a "civilian" radar facility designed to keep track of space satellites.

"People are obsessed with this fear of being cheated," remarked one Soviet official. "There are loopholes, but they are on the fringes. If we can reach a commonality in our perception of security, I don't think there will be an incentive to cheat. . . . You can't upset the strategic balance by cheating."

U.S. experts aren't so sure. The basic function of verification, as it has been carried out since the early 1970s, is to give the two superpowers early warning of an ambiguous or suspicious move. Because major cheating or a "breakout" from a treaty—such as the ABM treaty—would require years of work, early warning is important to the other country's effort to either stop or to respond to a strategic change.

Now Krasnoyarsk has absorbed some of that long, protective lead time and could go into operation within a few short months. What is it? That's where U.S. experts disagree. To begin with, Krasnoyarsk



almost certainly has the capability to keep track of space objects. But, as one U.S. arms-control official notes, it was obviously built to do "a whole lot more than that."

A simple space tracking radar would point upward, avoiding the reflections or "clutter" from objects on or near the ground. But Krasnoyarsk is pointed northeast, tilted only slightly upward so it can see anything coming over the horizon. It also appears to be an exact duplicate of other new Soviet early-warning radars positioned, legally, on border areas.

The most ominous view of its purpose is being pressed by the Defense Department, where officials insist Krasnoyarsk is a "battle-management radar," a nerve center for a nationwide ABM system—the very development that the 1972 ABM treaty was written to prevent.

Mr. Lord says he thinks a second possible use for Krasnoyarsk would be to coordinate the launching of Soviet intercontinental-ballistic missiles in the event of an enemy attack on the missile silos. This so-called "launch on warning" tactic, according to Mr. Lord, would require a powerful radar located far enough inland to detect the targeting patterns of incoming warheads.

Spurgeon Keeny, who was deputy director of the arms-control agency during the Carter administration, has a more benign theory. He thinks Krasnoyarsk is a case of *kopek-pinching*. Instead of paying for two expensive radar facilities, one on the bleak, uninhabited Arctic coastline and one on the Pacific that would be needed to legally fill the gap in radar coverage, some Soviet bureaucrat sold the idea that it would be cheaper and easier to have one radar built further inland.

Mr. Keeny thinks the Soviets assumed they could negotiate away the cheating problem. "It is just very hard for sovereign nations to admit they're engaged in wrongdoing."

Soviet negotiators have already made one attempt to deal with Krasnoyarsk by offering to stop work on the facility if the U.S. would abandon plans to modernize two U.S. radar facilities permitted by the ABM treaty, one in England and another in Greenland. This offer was dropped after it was given the back of the hand by U.S. officials.

Some of them, though, see the offer as a small glimmer of hope. It shows the Soviets "are aware that they do have a problem," explains one official.

Secretary of State George Shultz has suggested that any Soviet offer to abandon work at Krasnoyarsk would have to be policed by extraordinary verification measures. "Things that are not exposed now would have to be exposed," he says. "You would have to be able to see what is going on under cover."

But that might not work either. "As an intellectual exercise, we once tried to work out whether a guy could walk in there and figure out what it really was. And the answer is no," explains one State Department technical expert.

"You'd have to look at the computer software and then you'd have to be sure that that was the only software that would ever be used in there," he says. The only sure way to restore the protection of long lead times assured by the ABM treaty, he adds, would be to get the Soviets to dismantle most of the structures at Krasnoyarsk.